

Coins

This 'M' marks the designer, not the spot

By Roger Boye

SOME QUESTIONS from the numismatic mailbox and [hopefully] some helpful answers:

Q—My brother has a 1925 and a 1928 quarter, both with "M" mint marks. Both coins are circulated. Have they any value?—J.C.L., Chicago.

A—The letter "M" you refer to, which is above and just to the right of the date, is not the mint mark. It's the initial of the coin's designer, Herman A. MacNeil.

If your quarters have mint marks, they would be located above and just to the left of the date. The 1925 quarter was minted in Philadelphia only, and 1928 quarters were made in Philadelphia, Denver ["D" mint mark] and San

Francisco ["S" mint mark]. Of course, the Philadelphia-minted coins do not carry mint marks.

The 1925 and 1928 quarters sell from \$1 to \$2 in very good condition.

Q—Could you tell me why, on United States coins, only Lincoln faces toward the right—D.M., Oak Park.

A—First, let's set the record straight. Your question should read: Why, on the "heads" side of currently minted U.S. coins, does only one design—Lincoln on the one-cent piece—face the right. The answer, simply, is coincidence.

Many U.S. coins which are no longer minted have designs which face the right. For examples of right-facing designs, check the Indian on the Buffalo nickel minted from 1913 to 1938,

Franklin on the half-dollar minted from 1948 to 1963, or the figure of Liberty on the dimes and quarters minted from 1892 to 1916, or on the half-dollars minted from 1892 to 1915.

Q—The interesting thing about a \$20 bill we found is that "In God We Trust" is omitted. The series is 1934-A, Chicago Federal Reserve Bank. Does this place any value on the bill?—S.Y., Galesburg.

A—The motto "In God We Trust" was added beginning with the 1963 series \$20 Federal Reserve Notes. Your note was probably printed in the early 1940s, and thus would not have the motto on the reverse side.

Dealers sell 1934-A \$20 bills for about \$30 in extremely fine condition and for about \$45 in uncirculated condition.